

FABLES for the FRIVOLOUS

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SYLVIA MARCHANT PHILLIPS



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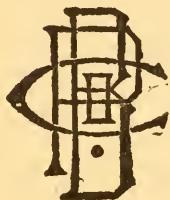


FABLES FOR THE FRIVOLOUS

AND OTHERS

BY

SYLVIA MARCHANT PHILLIPS



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THE PEASANT MAID AND THE FAIRY PRINCE

At the time when, if one spoke evilly, there fell from one's mouth cold storage egg shells, Nina, a sweet maid, lived with her parents in a land now extinct. Nina toiled all the day in the field and still she was beautiful.

Between her mamma and Nina there was an understanding that the young girl should marry a rich man if such a one should ask her. Nina longed to wed, yet, as she faced the sober age of seventeen, she despaired not, neither did she smile.

One night while the fairies danced on the greens Nina, tin can carelessly tied to her waist, made for the well to draw her papa some hop product. Suddenly, not due to hops nor else, Nina beheld before her a handsome prince in a pale blue and gold kimono. She tried to faint and he caught her in his strong arms. She had pretty eyes and she knew how to use them. It was a case of love at first sight. The Prince proposed and Nina said pleasantly, "I'm on." Hurriedly, but gently, the Prince threw Nina into his snow white taxi and the process of abduction was in full force.

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They were married by the Gaunt Priest of Genii Tower. Then they telephoned to Nina's parents begging forgiveness, and after some delay, occasioned by the lack of attention on the part of "Central," the pardon was granted. Ma and Pa drove over to the castle and bossed things when the young couple went to Europe.

And the Prince loved Nina and his inlaws, and the sun never set on their happiness.

This was in the good old days. Nowadays if you play one set of tennis in a field, men turn from your peeling face. And if you be poor, though you be ever so beautiful, it's—well, it's your own fault. The fairy prince of the silk kimono marrieth the princess of the silk kimono and the man of the overalls he also marrieth the girl of the silk kimono. Nay, there is no one for you, Cinderella, except him of the crusty disposition. With this must ye be content!

THE CLAUSES

Once upon a time a woman of powerful learning proclaimed herself complete mistress of English as it should be spoken. She was a graduate of college and could write hieroglyphics with a hairpin. Her mother could not prevail upon her to give up her studies and become instead a Bringer-Up-of-Children. When the kind lady addressed her daughter on this subject, the girl would fly into a rage and cry, "Noun, pronoun, verb, adjective forever!" Then she would carve on the mantelpiece a simple declarative sentence.

Of course all this soon upset her mother and she worried night and day.

One evening the father, returning from the forum, drew his wife aside and whispered in her ear, "To-day I met a fine fellow whose diction is unsurpassable and who I think will some day become Emperor of this state."

"Oh," cried the wife, "let's invite him to dinner!" And the future Emperor was as good as captured.

Billee, that was our student's name, examined every word he uttered at the table, but always did he put the correct clause in the correct place. Billee felt that she certainly could live happily in the atmosphere of this youth who abhorred the use of

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"aint." They were married and not long after were blessed beyond everything when Billee published a book of rhetoric, the royalties from which supplied them both with luxuries galore.

This was in the good old times! Nowadays, even if your friends at college call you Billee instead of Elvira, and even if you are a double q in English you cannot exist by swallowing words, so select you as a mate one who can write, no matter how badly, several figures and a short sentence on a bank check, for the Price of Eggs is High and Butter is healthier than oleomargarine!

THE FROST KING

Blanketed in a robe of handsome openwork hail, King Cynic, seldom budging from his comfortable throne of ice, ruled the lost tribe of Snow Images. He was cold and heartless, but his people considered him a clever monarch and all lauded his stern and set principles.

He was a scoffer at women and earned the alias of The Frost King. The most attractive Salome cavorters of the age performed their intricate execution steps before him and, though some deserved praise, King Cynic remained the stoic, never even as much as watching the performers.

As in an apathy, he brooded. Nothing interested him. No beauty of Nature could awaken him. No sign of ecstasy did he reveal at the sight of his sumptuous wine repasts. He ruled, ate, slept and drank in a trance, and outside of snickering at his own laws, was never seen to smile.

The women of the land were tired of hearing about him and his peculiar ways, and none of them had any desire to be his bride.

Nearly every tribe requires a queen as well as a king. A married man at the head of a nation is less domineering. King Cynic, at forty, had never winked at a lady of quality nor bowed to a beggar

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maid. Nevertheless, his subjects did not give up hope. The Prime Minister reassured the Cabinet with: "Our King is at a dangerous age, for the older they grow the younger they select them."

This satisfied everybody and they looked for salvation from another sphere when youthful Sonoma Sweet sallied forth from the city of Springtime to visit her cousin of cooler clime.

The wind and sleet were too much for the gentle girl bred in the lap of summer and she was compelled to replace her flowing garments with a sack of seal. All the coats in the place came from the skins of the King's own trained animals.

It was while buying her jacket that Sonoma met Cynic. With all her wiles she endeavored to fascinate him. His ascetic face soon became wreathed in jolly lines. He tossed aside his pessimistic pose and bathed in the sunshine of her smile.

He courted her with precious icicles and let her have at wholesale price another seal coat. He finally, in a rash moment, engaged himself to her and, with the presenting of the ring, asked for a kiss—his first kiss!

As he drew near for reward his icy breath froze Sonoma's red, red lips, and, after having heard so much about the heat of love, the King received only a cold chill.

He turned scoffer again and turned Sonoma down. She, sensibly, forgot all about him and went back to her sunny home and married the stoker on her father's yacht.

This was in the bygone days. Nowadays women never get tired of cynics, for they are the easiest to

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catch. And if one should jilt you, you do not forget him nor do you let him forget you, but hasten to a man of law, where you sue for the cynic's money, which you have no chance of getting.

A cynic is a man who thinks he is well armed against woman, but suddenly finds the arms around his neck!

THE WEEPING BEAUTY

There once dwelt, in the ancient Kingdom of Tiers, a young widow who was renowned far and wide for the grave and deep manner in which she bemoaned the loss of her only husband. Noble men, gallant men, fond lovers all, knocked daily at her door but received no response. They would linger listening to her sobs, each secretly wishing that he might have been the one to die and so have such a thing of loveliness weep for him.

The days of the widow's grief were of great length.

After many moons she stepped from her lonesome home out into the world of sunshine. The undaunted suitors clustered around her, madly seeking a glance, a smile, a word.

The widow, gazing high above their heads, rested her eyes, softened by sighing, upon "Best Catch." So wonderful was her magnetic power that she immediately created a burning fire in his broad chest.

He pleaded for her hand in early marriage and she consented, telling him frankly, though he was not her first love, the memory of whom would never be effaced, she liked him. He was satisfied, for he longed to comfort her, and surely she had need of comfort.

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The entire life of this fortunate prince was spent in reconciling his wife to the fate of her previous bid. The widow clung to him, a tender vine which grew more fragrant with every fall of dew.

This was in the good old times. Nowadays, if you cry for any man save the one to whom you are talking, you will never take a walk down a certain aisle wearing dull cream and Irish lace, for in this age of chivalry, man laugheth at the crocodile, saying, "Away, thou of the red nose and swollen eyelids."

The Weeping Beauty of bygone days must have had a specially prepared cold cream. Since she has taken the formula with her, grin you in the faces of all men and hear them call you "Jolly little devil."

THE NIGHTINGALE

In search of a helpmate, the King of the Mystic Isles heralded a proclamation promising to wed the woman who could sing to his complete satisfaction in the key of high G. Since the King was handsome, wealthy and lovable, the poor musicians of the land who were previously starving suddenly found themselves besought by multitudes of ambitious feminine pupils, young and old. Signor Barytone, the least expensive teacher, shut his garret door and embarked upon a sea of luxury.

On the day of the competition the gates of the palace were flung wide at eight o'clock and many a maiden scampered through, some fearing to be too late, some too early. The King meanwhile had regretted his impulsive step toward matrimony. He arose not until eleven, going to the audience halls much later and very timidly.

Now, he had taken a wise precaution. In each ear he had stuffed a tiny ball of soft, white cotton, thus deadening his hearing. Judge him not! The contestants sang, shrieked, or howled as the case chanced to be, and the King, reading from the expressions on the face of his Prime Minister, could tell which were the most heartrending voices.

The King's complacent and easy air gave bound-

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less hope to each chanter. The last songstress, a pretty girl, though shabbily attired, issued a soul piercing cry. The Prime Minister was stricken deaf and bowed his head out of pity for her and himself. But the King wrongly appraised this act as one of emotion. He applauded uproariously and went wild with delight, for the beauty of this songbird pleased him beyond music.

After dismissing the sorrowing and indignant losers, the King proposed to the poor maid, calling her, "My Nightingale." The Prime Minister, still deaf and thankful for the affliction, thought one would do as well as another and complimented the King upon his choice. Somehow the new consort never attempted to raise her voice in song again, and the King never thought to ask her, having forgotten all his other troubles, once married.

This was in the good old days. Nowadays any voice is enchanting to the man anxious to wed, for he deadens his imagination. All women seem alluring to the tired business bachelor as they sing "Home, Sweet Home," and a ragtime ditty off the key of high G maketh every one wild.

JACK'S BEANSTALK

During the reign of King X., Jack, his son and heir prospective after twenty-one years of waiting, attained his majority. Though handsome of face and of sturdy form, he did not stand knee high to a grasshopper.

Over this shortness of length Jack fretted considerably, for while on shooting expeditions some one was always bound to hurt his feelings by mistaking him for game. Never a favorite with the courtiers, he lost all chance of being well liked when he came of age, and his father ordered general fasting for four days in honor of the occasion.

Wishing to gain the good graces of his hungry future subjects, he tried hard to hit upon a way which would establish a better reputation for him. He concluded were he to wed a tall maiden every one would look up to her and through this display of taste he might be the recipient of awe and admiration.

So he decided to marry a princess of high rank. She made up plentifully the height which he lacked. Slender, very tall and graceful, she towered over him. Opposites attracting, they agreed to love, honor and obey.

It seemed to Jack that he could never repay his

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wife for the notoriety she brought upon him, and the united kingdom rose up and proclaimed him the first eugenist, for his offspring, an heir, was neither too short nor too tall—just a happy medium.

This was in the good old days! Nowadays, when a tall, slender girl marries a man shorter than herself she takes off the heels of her shoes and he adds them to his, both fearful lest their friends cry out, "There goes Jack and his beanstalk." During this the reign of \$, folks think the word "eugenic" is the cue to laugh and the word "obey" in the binding ceremony has been changed to "Oh! pay."

A PATIENT GRIELDA

Griselda, fair to see, wrote poetry for a living in the turret of her father's castle. Hour by hour she ticktacked on her typewriter, stopping reluctantly when darkness came.

With a glance of anguish at an unfinished heart throb she would prepare for the arrival of her cavalier. She could hear in the distance the familiar clank of his sample Gazump car, and, leaning o'er her balcony, she would toss down her ravings, the accomplished work of that day.

The castle stood high and the prince had a long trip ahead of him. To save time he read Griselda's latest sonnets on the way up his ladder and scribbled across them notes of criticism.

This especial evening Prince Alarming rode into the palace grounds, noticeably peeved and wearing a sulky frown. The folio came circling down and lay unheeded on the mildewed grass.

The Prince wearily mounted the ladder which led to Griselda's window. She watched his progress, saw him doze now and then as he paused for rest on every sixtieth rung. At last he reached his destination, but at once took leave, for it would be late indeed when he again touched terra firma. "I will

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send a message some time this week, Grissy," he cried, and was off with a parting kiss.

Griselda waited all week for the message, which failed to come. A month passed and Griselda, suffering in silence, acquired the art of being patient.

Then the King's son returned. "Griselda," he commenced breathlessly, "I have been trying to keep away from your poetical presence, as my fond parents wish me to wed Princess Butterfly, an empty headed, shallow girl; but a woman of brains for mine!" He flung wide his arms and Griselda came into her own.

This was in the good old days. Nowadays when one writes poetry one does not receive from it a living or anything else. And when "he" promises to send you a message and for some reason does not, restrain yourself you cannot, and in no time find yourself saying, "Give me Bryant 60 something."

Nowadays they never come back and the butterfly flourishes in goodly crop.

THE TWO COLORS

The sun sank and the last streak of crimson flooded the white sky. The medicine man ran up the slippery steps of the marble palace and was met by an aproned duchess who placed her fingers warningly to her lips. The medicine man tip-toed past her.

Later, the same duchess rustled through a long corridor, which led to the king's private audience room. "Henry," she whispered, rapping on the door, "it's a girl."

All of this unnerved the king, for he had been looking forward to an heir, perhaps a thin and ghastly one, but just the same, an heir!

The baby bore the name of Snow White and Rose Red, because of the brilliant color surmounting her alabaster cheeks. Her mother attributed the child's complexion to the fact that she first appeared at sunset and the sky was now reflected in the baby's face. Black hair, dark as night, only offset the mother's pretty superstition.

Snow White at eighteen, the ideal of womanhood, in order to preserve her noted skin, indulged in frequent walks, strenuous exercises and wholesome food. No one could compete with her for delicacy of feature and development of form. Fond

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of sports, she would ramble through thicket and thorn, were it necessary, to procure the healthiest air.

Standing before her cheval glass, she often asked : "Oh, delight of my heart, reflector of my grace, is there anywhere a maiden lovelier than I?" Strange to say, the mirror never answered, and, satisfied, Snow White spent her days in peace.

She was as good as she was beautiful. For instance, to prove her honesty, here is an incident, recited by herself when she reached home :

During a sprint one day she espied a small packet and a tiny box in the road. She bent—bending is good for the hips—and, picking up her find, proceeded to open it. The words "rice powder" on the cover conveyed nothing. A soft, flaky substance spilled out. Remembering the "powder" part, Snow White became frightened and, thinking it an explosive, tossed it away and turned her attention to the box labelled "Milady Rouge."

Inside this she discovered a mound of red. Blushing, she cried : "This scarlet signifieth my shame for having in my possession that which does not belong to me!" She dropped the box remorsefully and, thankful for her escape from theft, remained from that day on always upright.

This was in the olden, golden days. There's been a slight change since that time, and nowadays maidens strive to be nose white and cheeks red. They are again fond of sports, and, though rice powder is called "my best friend," a box of rouge still creates a blush!

THE GLASS SLIPPER

It may have been on Mars; at any rate, somewhere there was once a select school for débutante princesses where the blossoming daughters of royalty received the education which finished them. It was conducted by the best fairies on the planet and consisted of a practical study of domestic science. One could learn how to preserve pickles, how to distinguish cotton voile from cotton muslin and how to dress.

Most of the lessons were devoted to the latter subject, and each princess endeavored to outdo her sister in the selection of attractive garments.

Just before graduation the principal fairy offered a prize in the form of a pair of dainty, shell pink tango slippers, size No. 1, which were to be presented to the princess whose feet they fitted perfectly.

The pupils immediately began dieting. They sent over to their respective homes for their maids and nightly massage followed.

Somehow there was much trouble and confusion over the awarding of the prize, for on commencement day the ankle touching gowns of the sweet girl graduates revealed only the tiniest feet imaginable. The result was that the slippers were too large for

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any member of the class and had to be turned over to the janitress of the building.

All the young ladies were very much disappointed, but they had some satisfaction in knowing that more than one Duke looked at their shapely feet in admiration. A small foot was considered the essence of aristocracy, and a high, curving arch told of blue blood within.

This was in the olden, golden days. Nowadays, when a course at a young ladies' college seems to consist of coarse athletics, we see our modern maidens running sixty mile races in two seconds and hurdling bars in the school gymnasium. We see our modern maidens tramping through the country on fresh air trips and tramping to Washington on other fresh trips.

To perform these new stunts one must have a good understanding, and the largest foot is the greatest feat of all.

JACQUES, THE LADY-KILLER

Once upon a time when every day was Sunday and no one had fears of blue Mondays and empty pay envelopes, Jacques sang at the pleasure of King Kipper in the auditorium of his magnificent palace. Far into the summer nights, when the hall was stifling with hot air, Jacques would unburden his soul to a host of diamond-bedecked heads and necks that craned from pearl dog collars in order to obtain a better view of the young minstrel.

The ladies-in-waiting were all madly in love with him. Though Jacques was partial to blondes, and such were they all, he could not find one among them so appealing that he felt he could stand her around all the time.

So the ladies-in-waiting waited in vain and Jacques threw his eyes to the heavens as if in search of an angel, and sang on, to the distress of the King's only child, Princess Kipper. She, too, loved Jacques, but not obviously. Jacques never looked her way. He was too proud to stoop to marry even royalty where he did not love.

Finally, as the moon bade adieu to its last quarter, Jacques flipped his, and it fell "heads," which decided for him that he should give up his career of yodelling for one more lucrative.

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When the word spread around the court that Jacques was going to depart, the ladies-in-waiting sank unconscious, one and all. But Jacques resolutely skipped. He had hardly walked a yard when, hearing heavy footsteps behind, he turned, to see frail little Kipper running in his wake. His heart melted at the sight of her curly locks so tousled from pursuit.

Beckoning with his chamois gloved finger, he sang in F major. "O silly little Kipper, why do you follow so worthless a fellow? If you stay at home you will soon become Queen!"

At this the Princess appeared frightened.

"What! Hast poisoned my papa?" she asked. Jacques hid his face at the very suggestion and the Princess was soon tight in his grasp comforting him.

Hand in hand, they strolled over hill and dale. Coming to the next kingdom, they were married and settled down to efface the memory of their past. Little Kipper made all their clothes and Jacques would hie himself to the woods for food. Here he would think deep thoughts over his ill-fitting home-made garments. In consequence of which he realized he had committed a great crime and sent his wife speedily back to her father.

King Kipper was so pleased by this self-sacrificing act on the part of his son-in-law that he dubbed him knight and promised him a home within the castle walls, as he put it, "till the foundation stones shall break away!"

This was in the good old days. Nowadays, gentlemen, if you wear chamois gloves and make al-

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luring gestures at queens, there is no doubt that you will be rewarded with a suitable drubbing and the chances are the stones will break and you will break them!

KNIGHT AND LADY

Sir Richard was as bold a knight as ever claimed a crest, and never flashed a silver shield upon a broader breast. He fought in many frightful wars, then joined the Templar force, and doing so, as per the rules, could never wed of course. Descended from a fine, old branch of famous churchmen, he was only doing credit to his ancient family.

While marching forth to war one day he sadly chanced to meet a charming maid in bonnet blue of mien and contour sweet. He bade farewell to sacred oaths, he threw aside his mask, "I wish to be a man," said he, "to love is all I ask."

Sir Richard mortal in a way, set to and died at last. That was five hundred years ago. Five centuries have passed. 'Tis time for Dick to incarnate! He comes to light again, this life reversed, a maiden he, with curly, golden mane.

Oh! nowadays, Sir Richard has evolved into a wife. He is thusly doing penance for the wrongs of his last life! Sir Richard lifts his skirts at mice and mounts the nearest chair. Sir Richard once so worthy never pays his bills or fare. For he has clean forgotten all the days of fiery steeds. He rides about in limousines and wears grass widow

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weeds. He's really quite unconscious of the time of long ago and even has the pseudonym of Florence, often Flo.

Sir Richard was as bold a knight as ever charged a spear and now he is as meek a maid as ever felt a fear. Yet, so they vow, come Judgment Day if you will only wait, not strong, nor frail, Sir Richard-Flo will be proportionate.

This tale of long ago and now might fully well expound the reason why on some men's wrists their clocks are bound around, and why some women nowadays must dress and act like men. It's re-creation—that is all, nine cases out of ten.

THE LITTLE MATCH-MAKER

'Twas New Year's Eve! The boulevards lay glistening in the winter moonlight like ever so many cakes of frozen ice. Inside the castle it was cold, cold, cold! Though seven men had lent a hand and loads of advice, and though loads of coal had been used, the furnace refused to work.

The Princess of the frosty palace did not feel the bitterness, she was too warm-hearted. She flittered about tying mistletoe here and there, smiling to herself as she saw in vision some gay prince clasp and kiss his favorite lady 'neath the twig of licensed privilege.

Soon the expected guests would arrive and the decorated walls of the castle would resound with the holiday laughter of young and old. Suddenly the Princess was swept by a slight breeze, and, calling down the speaking tube, she begged John "to do something with the furnace!" John apparently had done something to the furnace and no one seemed to be able to right his wrong.

The alarm clock buzzed seven and the first couple put in their appearance. "They have come to supper," thought the Princess. Following came others unto a hundred, and none noticed the lack of heat, so warmly were they received.

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They played games and minuetted. After a generous spread the Princess slyly pointed out the mistletoe and bade the gentlemen enjoy themselves. What a little matchmaker!

With bright eyes and rosy cheeks she watched, without the least sign of jealousy, every girl friend kissed; aye, thrice! As is the rule, the men forgot their hostess, but she was lost in the happiness of all around her. Besides, she was already engaged to be married to a traveling bard.

Will you believe that every unmarried prince found a mate that night, and some were very awkward osculators?

This was in the good old times. Nowadays most men would prefer to face death by hanging from a sycamore than to face a young lady beneath a sprig of mistletoe. Nowadays no girl is ever lost in the happiness of those around her, no matter how safely engaged to a traveling salesman. Matchmakers are found in heaven, and the safest match is made in one's own parlor.

A LAD AND HIS WONDERFUL LAMPS

Nahu, a pleasant lad, of peasant parentage, planted potatoes in the conservatories of the Queen. Unnoticed and uncomplimented by any, he shot from shy boyhood into strong, stalwart manhood. The sun, shining down relentlessly, had turned the tips of his brown hair to burnished gold, and his large eyes were deep, dark and beautiful.

It was the habit of the Queen, as she was unmarried, to oversee her land. Daily she would inspect the farms, for potatoes were a luxury, and she could not trust them in the hands of servants—which generally meant in their mouths.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

One evening as the Queen made a last round of the potato patch she came across Nahu, bowing deferentially. His hair mystified her by its many shades, and his eyes, suddenly uplifted to hers, caused her to press her hand to her thumping heart.

So unsuppressed was her admiration for the young man that Nahu, receiving open flattery for the first time, was frightened. Seating himself on the garden plow, he went rapidly home. The

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Queen, behind the sash of her window, could only see his retreating shoulders, but the expression of his innocent eyes was marked indelibly on her heart.

While at work the following day Nahu, trembling still from his first compliment, received a message which read: "Oh, lad of the wonderful eyes, come let them be as lamps to guide me through life. Meet me at yonder registrar's office." It was signed by the royal pen. Nahu, grasping the situation, lost his wits and sped in the direction opposite the designated tryst.

A WITCH IN DISGUISE

'An owl in a tree—really a witch in disguise—realizing the young man's desire to escape, hooted out as he ran by: "Too-whit, too-whoo, too-why; I would that you were I!" Immediately Nahu was transformed into an owl, and found himself in a leafy bower, blinking down at the witch, who was making ready to sail away in her airship. So Nahu never again was flattered for the beauty of his orbs. He can only use them at night. For revenge he hooted all his days 'neath the window of the Queen and disturbed her slumber.

This was in the olden, golden days! Nowadays the only lamps that attract a modern queen are the road lights on a motor car. If, these days, a maiden flatter a man, he will not hoot at her in return. Nay! But like a hungry dog he will nose around for more!

BROKEN THREADS

THE OPERATION

You are a little girl again. Do you object to traveling back so far? It is nearing summer and you are becoming restless. Teacher notices it from her desk. You have been wriggling, twisting and turning all day. Reading from a primer and reciting "pints and quarts" isn't half as much fun as skipping a rope or rolling a hoop.

To make matters worse, you have a loose tooth bothering you. Your tongue keeps knocking against it and hurting you. Why was school invented, anyway, and why was this one built directly opposite a field of wild daisies, that sing merrily, "Come and pluck us?"

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Prim Elizabeth, who sits across the aisle from you, is in total ignorance of the fact that your tooth is ripe and ready to fall. She is the only girl in the class you neglected to tell. Though seven years old, she still retains her baby teeth, so to make her envious you are aching to whisper about that one of yours.

Teacher is explaining at the blackboard how to

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draw queer people, with a line for their bodies and a circle for heads. As well as you can recollect, you have never seen their equal in human shape. It is stupid of Teacher and it is stupid listening to her. You decide it is a good chance to speak to Elizabeth.

Sliding to the side of your bench nearest the aisle you purse your lips. Like an all-seeing power Teacher sees your every move. She must have eyes in the rear of her head, for she sees you now! Pausing in her task, she beckons to you and you walk reluctantly to the front of the room. Teacher waits patiently until you are very close to her. Her eyes express great mortification felt for you. "Alice," she commands, "leave the room and remove whatever you have in your mouth."

How can she be so unreasonable, you wonder, as to expect you to extract a tooth? "I haven't anything in my mouf," you begin, but she interrupts you with, "Don't tell me. I have seen you chewing on something all afternoon."

You are stunned. The pupils who know your secret laugh aloud and Teacher, appearing much annoyed, orders you to your place, and hurrying back, you bury your face in your arms, thus escaping the rest of the lessons.

After dismissal you rush home with your tale of woe to Mother and beg her to put an end to your misery. She seems pained at the idea, but your pain is physical. You don't tell her so in just those words, but you moan. Mother, trembling lest she should harm you, ties a piece of coarse thread into a loop, which she lassoes around the wiggly object.

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The other end of the thread she fastens to the doorknob, suddenly looming up like a cannon ball.

You close your eyes and Mother leaves you alone. From the hall outside she calls, "Ready?" You gulp, "Yes." Mother pulls the door to with a bang. You hear a snap. The thread has broken! You guide your tongue to the familiar spot and behold! The hateful thing is still there. The thread has tangled and Mother returning condoles with you.

IT IS ALL OVER

Grasping the remaining strand and summoning all her courage, she tugs hard and presently you hear, "Out she comes!" You open your eyes, feeling like a new and important person. You run for a drink of water and it is all over.

But the broken threads have commenced and you are doomed to be their victim. That first one hung from the doorknob nearly a week before you remembered to take it to school as an exhibit of marvel, sewing cotton No. 40! Does it still lie in the old trash basket where Teacher threw it when you endeavored to show it to Elizabeth, I wonder.

THE FIRST DANCE

“Dick,” whom you like better than any young man you know, has invited you to accompany him to his “frat hop.” You are seventeen, just returned from boarding school and more unsophisticated than the average. Your face is sweet, your limbs supple and young, and your hair streams in soft curls over your erect shoulders. Your forehead is smooth and the clear side part in your coiffure gives to you a winsome, boyish look. Just the same you cannot see why “Dick” selected you. Manly “Dick,” so full of honest fun, so popular and so handsome. This last strikes you with a pang.

Your snowy coverlet is strewn with dresses and you and mother are sorting out which dress you could possibly wear to the dance. She holds your last year’s pink mull to the light and you make a wry face. Mother smiles kindly and tosses it aside. Now comes your white dimity. A mean thought that both mother and the dimity are old-fashioned creeps into your head. Well, after all, the dimity is less out of style than the rest, and you suggest a new sash. Mother shows you how to let down the hem. She cannot do it for you; she must go to the smaller children, and as she departs she says, “You really need a new dress, Alice.” You wince and

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exclaim, "Why, I've my pink——" then you stop. Not because you cannot name another color, but for the first time you notice that mother looks tired and her hair is turning gray. You hate to acknowledge it and your lips tighten as the needle flies in and out of the dimity.

THE HAPPY EVENING ARRIVES

The happy evening arrives, and "Dick" appears punctually, bringing a bouquet of pink roses, which miraculously match your ribbons. As he assists you with your wrap his hands linger on your shoulders for an instant. Then your face flushes and you ask, "Shall we go?"

The floor is crowded and the dancing has already started. You and "Dick" have walked. He hands you a booklet, but you have not the strength to turn the cardboard cover. You have suddenly grown cold, for, as you glance about you, no one is dancing the way you have been taught. "Dick," you begin in a shaky voice, "what is this?" And "Dick" answers pleasantly, "This is a trot. Will you try it?" You drop your fan. The latest dances have reached Darveyville! You mumble something that sounds like "clumsy," but "Dick" has his arm around your waist and is whirling off with you.

You stumble. You hop. Somebody giggles and you stand stark still. Another couple dash upon you and you gaze at "Dick" pleadingly. "Let's sit it out," he says, and, taking your arm, leads you, your sash untied and trailing. A prancing man

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steps on it and dress and ribbon are torn badly. "Dick" leads you to a quiet spot, and you can do nothing but finger your dress, crimson of face and faint at heart. "Dick" tells you not to mind and he watches the dancers absently. You feel you have disgraced him and you might as well let him have some enjoyment, so you let him understand that he may take you home and come back later. He accepts this with such alacrity that you could cry heartily.

You both go out into the lovely summer night. "Dick" intimates that he would rather walk. You think him ashamed to be seen with you even in the old village carry-all. He is talkative and you find yourself laughing against your will. Everything seems dreamy and faraway, including "Dick," and you distinguish his voice as from the distance, gently arguing. You listen. "And, if you care, you will wait for me until I am established in business." This is most of what you gather. You seem to be riding on a cloud. "Dick" takes your silence for bashful consent and he has kissed you, and then again. Soon you can hear his whistle far down the road. You lean dizzily on the garden gate and the lawn comes up to meet you.

A TELEPHONE CALL

The next day you do not tell mother, for you think "Dick" is fooling and you blush for shame at the liberty you allowed him unprotestingly. You are mending the torn sash and many times you prick

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your fingers. The telephone bell rings sharply. How queer at this time of the afternoon. You conclude that it is father, who is anxiously asking about the baby's croup. You jerk your thread hard and mother calls, "Alice." Your heart pounds and you give a violent pull at the thread and it breaks! You run down the stairs.

As from the distant shore, just like the night before, you discern "Dick's" voice: "Why, of course. I meant every word I said, dear; have you told your mother?"

You haven't, but you will. Oh, you will!

ENGAGED

In two months you are to be married to Richard. You are so engrossed, head of fluffy hair bent over your neat sewing, that you do not know that I am talking about you. There will be a finely stitched initial on all your household linen. Doesn't it seem pretty as you twist the last end of the difficult letter? It isn't difficult? That is because you are really writing "love" with a needle.

You are guessing what Dick is doing at this very moment. Will he put through that sale? Will you be able to take that trip abroad, and will the worry wrinkle on his brow jump overboard during the journey? You hope it will.

The door opens and a friend, a girl your own age, slips in and confronts you without your having heard. She admires your work and allows you to continue while she relates bits of local gossip of no interest to you. She tells you that "Jeanne and Ted are engaged (poor Ted!), and that Mrs. Eldridge is crazy about the young minister." Mrs. Eldridge was once your Sunday school teacher.

UNPLEASANT GOSSIP

Something compels you to look squarely at your friend. She bows her head and takes your sewing,

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running her fingers over the embossed initial. "I don't like to be the one to break the news," she begins, and you resume your work, "but mother saw Dick in New York yesterday dining with a beautiful woman." Your needle slips and your thread tangles. You wrench it, thinking to do away with the knot. The thread breaks and you are obliged to face your visitor. "I guess I can trust Dick," you find yourself saying.

You have forgotten to offer tea. You have forgotten everything but what she said, and there is a film across your eyes.

"It's none of my business, I suppose," continues the friend, speaking truthfully for once, "but that's the sad part of long engagements with the girl living in the country and the man in town. There are so many alluring women!" She rises, plants a kiss on your warm cheek and departs quickly.

Four hundred years pass before Dick comes that evening. He pats your cheek, still feverish, and tells you he has had two hard days of it. You do your best to remain cool and calm before your contemplated storm. He goes on to say that the city is roasting and buyers are crabbed cranks.

THE EXPLANATION

"What's a buyer?" you ask, ready to start the quarrel. Dick brightens perceptibly. You seldom seem interested in his business.

"They buy our shirtwaists," he replies, only too ready to talk. "There was one yesterday. She was a widow and the wage earner for a family of

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four, rather handsome but shrewish. I had to take her to lunch after the sale, and she certainly knew a lot of things to order that she liked to eat! Her appetite must have killed her husband!"

What is this? You are laughing, or are you crying? You know not which, but you just press your lips to the worry line on Dick's high forehead, brush back his hair and sob right down on his broad, strong shoulder.

MOTHERHOOD

The baby has been ill all night. Your dear, little son is sick and you are fretting and waiting impatiently for the arrival of the grave, busy doctor. Your hands nervously clutch the white flannel petticoat you are cat-stitching. The tiny form may never wear it. Your fingers grasp the goods violently and you sew rapidly as if to finish it in time—in time for what? The china clock with its graceful cherub ticks on and the baby breathes heavily. You can hear him plainly. Will the doctor never come?

A TRYING ORDEAL

You put your sewing down and go to the window. The day is warm and sultry and the wagons in the street rumble louder than ever. The baby cries faintly in his sleep and you walk quickly to the side of his crib. He has been with you three years, such happy years. He is quiet again, and you take up the petticoat. You have decided to scallop the flounce and it is nearly completed.

You cannot sit still. You take another look at the baby and feel his forehead, over which one lock

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of curly, damp hair hangs limply. The small brow is feverish. Then you sew, sew, sew! At every sound you raise your head.

Finally, the bell rings. The doctor! No, the maid in cleaning the brasses has pressed the button. You call in a hushed voice that she will wake the baby. Of what consequence is the shining bell when it may soon be covered by—

The bell rings a second time. How careless Mary is! Your hands quiver and your thread tangles and knots. You drag it trembling. It snaps and the thread breaks. You are too excited to find another needle, but you haven't time, anyway, for the second ring brought the doctor.

NOTHING SERIOUS

He comes in softly and asks you all about the child. He smiles gently and doesn't seem at all perturbed. How can he care? It isn't his baby. He lifts a chubby wrist and looks closely at the round, dimpled face of your boy. You hear him whisper, "Measles, nothing serious."

How relieved you are! You feel as though you could sink down at the doctor's feet. How much you have to live for! How much for which to be thankful! You run to the telephone to call up Dick.

He has been sitting at his desk just for that message for the last half hour. "Hello, Dick?" you ask with a funny, choking laugh, "it's only measles, Dick, dear, and a very slight case." And Dick an-

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swers you, maybe rather brokenly, "The little rascal! He takes after me. I had it four times!"

And you can smile at this and you do. Dear Dick, who always tries to make you feel comfortable and at ease, but what a fabrication!

A QUESTION OF DRESS

Little Dick needs a new kilt. You have been in the habit of buying a few yards of velvet—in summertime galatea—and from a pattern you have been cutting your boy's frocks. They have been trimmed with tiny pearl buttons and around the collars has been wide lace or piqué. You have adopted this style because Richard with his fair hair reminds you so much of the child in a well-known painting you admire.

You have just purchased some new material and you are spreading it out calculatingly on the dining-room table. Seriously you read the directions for making the little garment, and you pin the tissue paper pattern along a lengthwise fold of the goods. In no time you have back and front pieced together, and you commence basting. Pretty soon the sleeves shape themselves under your guidance and as you are preparing to turn up the broad cuff your door bursts open and, with a wild whoop, the fac-simile of the famous portrait enters.

YOUR LITTLE BOY

His hands and face are black. There is no disguising the latter, even though the former are

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thrust behind his back. His cheeks are scratched and his corduroy coat badly torn. His knees peep defiantly through good-sized holes in his stockings.

“Dick! Child!” you gasp; “where have you been?”

The little fellow grins at you unabashed, replying gleefully:

“Over in the lot playin’ ball, but the cop chased us.”

You long to put your fingers to your ears to shut out the slang and his hoarse voice. You would like to blind yourself to his ruffled clothes.

“Dick,” you say sweetly instead; “come see what mother is making for you.”

Can it be that he gazes scornfully at your sewing as you take a fresh, large stitch with which to interest him?

“Mother,” he rests his rumpled head against yours, “could I have some pants? The boys guy me so!”

You pause, astonished. Then you sew on in oblivion, just as if you had not heard.

“Mother,” he reiterates, “could I?” He pushes your elbow a trifle and your thread knots. You try to unravel it, but before your eyes floats a vision of little Dick in trousers. You pull your thread angrily, thinking, “Why must they grow up?” You tug at the sewing silk and it snaps. The thread is broken!

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BABYHOOD AND BOYHOOD

You smile at the smudged face of the small chap who is waiting so eagerly for your answer. "I'll think it over," you gradually murmur, and, gathering his chubby body in your arms you kiss over and over your baby—always your baby!

After dinner you broach the subject of trousers for little Dick to big Papa Dick, who argues, "Well, it's about time. The lad should have had them five years ago." That settles it. And big Dick can hardly wait to take little Dick down town to buy the first suit.

The next day little Dick stays home from school to go with Daddy, who stays home from business for the important undertaking of selecting the trousers. You stay home, too, and fondly fold up the unfinished frock, which you store away with the last lock of a certain sunny curl.

YOUR DAUGHTER'S WEDDING DAY

It is your daughter's wedding day. The house is tingling with suppressed excitement. The warm sun streams through the long windows of your pretty country home. Yes, you who started so modestly, you have a country home. Life has been kind to you and you wonder if you can ever, ever be thankful enough.

AN IMPATIENT BRIDEGROOM

Grace, your little girl—for she will always be "little" to you—wished to be married "where it was quiet, near the trees and the birds," and, though Harry laughed and insisted on an earlier date, he finally gave in, and June was decided upon. You are sorry Harry was not satisfied. He grumbled a good deal and worried you and you thought how terrible it would be if he became very angry, and—anyway here was the day and almost the hour and Harry could never back out now.

You look at yourself in the mirror and are satisfied with the reflection. Your gray dress is soft and well made and you are sure you can meet his

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people with ease and comfort, regardless of the fact that they are very wealthy.

Your younger sister, Emily, who never married, perhaps because she had dressed so many nervous brides, is upstairs now fixing Grace's veil. You hope Grace will not turn pale, for color to her is essential. How can such trivial things occupy your mind at such a momentous time?

Dick, your husband, performing an acrobatic stunt with his collar, demands your help, and you turn your thoughts to him, your heart fluttering on.

By four o'clock everyone is present. That is, every one save the bridegroom. There is your own tall son, Richard, beside the other Richard, your husband. The father resembles the son—he looks the younger. You marvel at the way he retains his smooth skin without the use of creams. There is Harry's mother. My! how she gushes.

The minister arrives and still no Harry, but you feel perfectly confident, for the same thing happened on your own especial day. Dick was late; why should Harry, not as perfect in a great many ways, be more punctual? Somehow the bubble of conversation sails out of the windows as the minister enters, and an air of stifled expectancy settles over all. Why is Harry's father so white about the mouth? The bright afternoon sun mellows, its first sign of fading. Where is Harry?

Harry is dressing at the town inn. Harry is roaring and fuming, while Lawrence, his chum and quarterback on the college team, is endeavoring to fasten a narrow glove upon the bridegroom's broad hand. Lawrence plants his knee against Harry's

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arm and clasps the button. All is well. Harry slaps on his high silk hat, and Lawrence pins a flower upon his coat lapel. Harry is ready, he declares, and both fly down and into a waiting rig.

Lawrence, fortunately, remembers to say the magic word, "Ring," just as they start. Of course, Harry has forgotten it. So he flies back and, knowing where to find it, searches the whole room. He tosses all his clothes around and discovers it in his waistcoat pocket. He gives it a loving pat, then hears a snap and, trembling, glances at his glove. The button is trembling, too. He tries to wind the loose thread around the button, but he is clumsy and the thread breaks!

A CATASTROPHE

The button rolls and rolls. Harry says something under his breath and he exchanges gloves with Lawrence. Lawrence is a very large man.

Later, flurried and flushed, Harry joins you in the rose-scented drawing-room and you notice during the hush that the hand clasping the hand of the pale lovely bride wears a glove—oh! how humiliating!—two sizes too big!

BON VOYAGE!

When your tall son, Richard, endeavoring to persuade you to cross the great Atlantic, turns about and says that you are "narrow," you set aside your petty fears and decide to take the trip, come what may, and your are positive it will. During the last year, the year following your daughter's marriage, you and your husband have fallen into a rut, but an ocean voyage, well, that will be "a sea change into something new and strange."

Since every chair is covered and every curtain down, since every blind is drawn and every shutter thatched, there is nothing left to do but clap the lid of your new-fangled trunk, hold your breath and prepare for the worst. You are a sad little picture as you stand, hat awry, taking a last view of the dressed-up furniture, wondering whether each cretonne clothed piece feels as important as you.

Actually off for Europe, the place that has seemed so far away, the make-believe place fashioned as an amusement park, so you imagine it. Your husband bustles in and announces the waiting taxi, and, catching up a grip, he hastens down the brownstone stoop. Your son half pushes you into the chugging cab. Your husband is shouting at the apparently

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deaf chauffeur. The car jerks and starts forward. You drop back and sigh.

Dick, Jr., is so enthusiastic, constantly coming down on his knee with a heavy fist. "England, London, Berlin, Paris, Life!" he cries. Your husband beams upon the youth and you make up your mind that you will never bring them both home wholly sensible and sane. Your head whirls. You are like a frightened bird.

You are jostled rather than walking of your own accord, and soon find yourself on the gigantic steamer. Dick is satisfied that you "just made it!" Out of the hue and din comes Grace, your daughter. You are so glad! You think she has decided to join you at the last moment. No, she has only come to bid you a fond farewell. She clings to you and there is a shouted warning. Grace still clings. She always was so emotional!

She clings this once because she cannot help herself. A bit of lace from your waist has caught itself in a brooch at her neck. She dare not rend herself asunder, lest she tear your blouse. A tiny stray thread has wound itself around the pin. You thrust her with all your force from you and the thread breaks!

Off she scampers with her worried Harry, the last to leave the ship! She has wept plentifully, so you feel doomed. A million kerchiefs are flying in the breeze. A million black dots seem scurrying and scattering. The boat moves, though you hardly know it, and you are pleasantly disappointed at not feeling a trifle ill.

You have already lost your men folks. They are

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nowhere in sight. A stranger at your side turns a pale, tear-stained face to you, and asks you if you don't "feel awful," and you do as you try to pierce the fathomless depths of the green pool into which your heart just sank.

A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

Early in the spring, on a promising, mild day, you were in a promising mood, too, and told your grandchildren—Grace's daughter, Dorothy, aged seven, and Dick's sons, five and three—that you would soon take them on a "picanic," as they call it. You filled their tiny heads with sugar-coated visions of a basket party in the country, and they have been teasing you ever since.

GOOD MEMORIES

Children have poor memories when it comes to, "Where did you leave the scissors?" or, "Does mother's precious remember what he did with the machine bobbin?" But they always recollect where the sweets are to be found, and seldom, if ever, do they forget a promise or forgive a broken one.

On a beautiful day in August you telephone to Grace and Harry, to Dick and Elise. (Elise, the French souvenir of Richard, Jr.'s tour abroad.) Grace is afraid the grass will be too damp and you can hear Harry pooh-poohing the idea at the other end of the wire. Grace consents, and Harry squeals joyously, running off to impart the jolly news to

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his small daughter. Elise practically decides to dress the boys in their old clothes.

The morrow shines bright, with not a cloud in the sky. At the designated hour you call for your grandchildren and their parents in your big, brown motor. The men, overgrown kiddies for the day, load the bottom of the car with wicker hampers and the enticing odor of dainty sandwiches and fruits pervades the tonneau.

The youngsters' eyes are glowing with excitement.

It is a long ride, and more than once the baby asks, "How much longer, Gran'ma?" Dick makes you all laugh with his loving cajolery directed at Elise, as she rhapsodizes over the scenery, a pleasant vacation from figured nursery walls.

Under a cluster of heavily leaved trees you finally draw up. On a soft grassy mound you spread a square, white cloth, and the luncheon is relished, even though Dick forces the cork into the olive bottle instead of taking it out.

Afterward the real fun commences. Dick and Harry play leap-frog with the boys, while Grace's little girl wanders off to pluck flowers for you to twine into a wreath for her. Every now and then she finds a large one and with gurgles of ecstasy carries it across the fields. With forethought you brought a spool of thread, and as you arrange the wreath you wind the thread to hold it fast.

When you were a tot the wreath would always fall apart and tumble down over your nose. You have used all the flowers on hand and Dotty fails to replenish you. Harry and the rest have walked

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off to explore, so, shading your eyes against the midday sun, you look ahead. Through the thick grasses a breeze stirring wafts to you a feeble cry. You are startled, and as you rise, your knees shake.

You hear the cry again and you call "Help!" with all your might, bringing Harry at leaps and bounds to your side. You manage to say "Dorothy." Harry begins a query and cuts short. See him speed over the ground and soon follow Dick, Elise and Grace, and the two tiny fellows, half falling as they race. Your throat seems bound by a tight band. If anything happens it's your fault, giddy, frolicking old lady!

NOTHING HAPPENS

But nothing happens—that is, nothing serious. Harry strides back with daughter Dorothy in his arms. "Where was she?" You clasp your hands and the child answers: "Stucked in the grass, Granny, all wet and mushy." And Harry further explains about "marshes," as you take the muddy bundle in your arms, crowning her with the wreath until she resembles a veritable Ophelia.

But you forgot to separate thread from spool, and, as you crown the queen, there is a snip and a snap. The thread breaks and the flowers shower Dorothy and you! All your pains for nothing? Ah! no; for there is reward in the kiss that tastes of woodland fern.

THE LAST

Old lady! don't you hear? Your feet on the fender are too near the warm coals. Why do you toast your toes in this way, and why have a grate fire flaming when it isn't nearly autumn yet? You feel chilly? After all, that is possible, since you were on your recent birthday—as much as that! Your husband will celebrate next month. I'll tell you how I found out. A little bird whispered that the wool in your trembling fingers will be a pair of slippers for your husband. You knit so slowly. Oh, I forgot about your left arm troubling you. Is it stiffness of the joints? From the heart, you think. Well, yours has been pulsing a long, long time.

SHADOWS CREEPING

The shadows are creeping stealthily into the room. They throw themselves in silent, fancy figures across the carpet. Thomas pussy cat purrs at your skirt. Now he stretches himself before the blaze and meows lazily. As you work your ivory stick, you seem to live on happy thoughts. They must be pleasant recollections. It is growing gradually dimmer, and you must halt the making of the

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gift. Thomas leaps into your lap and cradles contentedly in your good "black silk." Thomas is fastidious. You stroke his furry coat with a withered, shaking hand. Your left arm tires quickly. You shouldn't use it, you know. But you are obstinate and, stroking, you doze and dream.

You are off somewhere 'midst circling, singing birds, and through wild, waving trees you spy the red school with its flag rippling in the strong wind. A host of childish voices rise in gladsome praise, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." The scene swiftly changes, and you are carried over the speeding years. Music again! A burst of melodious, triumphal song, and you recognize your wedding march! But the faint cry of a babe, snuggling, nestling to your side, is the sweetest sound of all. You sigh and wake. The fire in the hearth has died, leaving the room still and cheerless save where those ashes of the past glow anew.

Your husband snoozes. You ought to warn him that it is almost supper hour. There! you have moved too abruptly. A sharp pain catches and stays you. Thomas pussy cat notices your agony. He pricks his ears. He is frightened. You make a final, useless effort. The ball of wool, the uncompleted present, slides to the floor. The hurt leaves your heart. How very peaceful you feel. Suddenly all weaving is over, and the slender thread of life breaks! Broken threads! You were doomed to be their victim.

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THE FIRST FAILURE

The comrade of your youth is disturbed from his slumber by Thomas. Walking to your chair, with the aid of a cane, he presses his purple lips to your cold forehead, and finding it so, quite naturally murmurs, "Dear girl." The tears course down his wrinkled cheeks and, if you know, it is the first time you have failed in the wifely duty of comforting your "Dick."

THE END

HER BEAUX

THE EGOTIST

The Right Man gazed adoringly at the Right Girl as she tilted her sunburned face and smiled up at him.

“There must have been many other men in your life before this summer,” he began tenderly, “men better than I and more worthy of you. Tell me about them, those other beaux.”

The Right Girl frankly displayed an even row of pearly teeth.

“Of course there have been,” she declared, “but none as nice as you. Truly,” she added quickly, as he gasped incredulously, “all the men I have ever known have gradually transformed from sugar-coated dreams into nightmares.”

The Right Man emitted a satisfied little laugh.

“I am lucky,” he sighed. “I don’t care now if a million men have loved you, as long as you marry me!”

A LITTLE JEALOUS

The Right Girl raised her eyebrows. “Indeed! I should think you would want to be the one and only, and be jealous of every fellow who ever glanced admiringly at me.” She spoke peevishly.

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"I'm not," replied the Right Man, "not the least bit envious, for haven't you told me that you were never in love before? Therefore, I am the first—the first to have kissed you."

Maybe the Right Girl winced a trifle. Maybe her conscience pricked her.

"Well, after all," she sighed, "though I have liked several men in my time, I have always realized that I was only interested in the pictures they drew of themselves, not the inner being."

The Right Man looked grave. "Are we egotists all?" he queried.

"Oh, no, only one," answered the Right Girl, reminiscently.

"Commence with him and slaughter them all off for me. I want to hear what you think of 'us men'."

"I shall put the egotist first," the Right Girl chatted, "'cause that is most likely what he would do, and, if you noticed, I also started talking with the personal pronoun 'I.' He would have done that, too. He presents himself with a list of his virtues and tells you how much his boss thinks of him. Once a celebrated artist wished to model after him."

The Right Man "humped" audibly.

"That's not all," she continued. "He is reverent toward the aged. That for his manliness. Just as if I couldn't see what an exertion it was for him to rise when Father came into the room. Just as if I couldn't see his padded shoulders. I guess the artist was an upholsterer. Later on I learned of what an excellent family he came. They were either the most prominent in Brooklyn or Hoboken,

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I forget which. He was good to his mother, so he said, and devoted to his unmarried sisters.

“When you get tired of hearing about his wonderful family, he switches off, for variety, and tells you he loves you, begs a kiss, and hopes that you will wait for him. He cannot marry until his brother, aged ten, arrives at manhood to take his place as head of the family. By now you are disgusted, and show it by being out when he calls and refusing to answer his letters. At last he comes to and finds it impossible to do without you, or so he thinks, but it is plain that his vanity is bruised and he thinks it is you who cannot live without him. He is only dead in love with himself all over again. He threatens self-destruction, but you fear nothing and warrant that it is the one thing that will never happen.

WASTED EVENINGS

“With a fond farewell he moans, ‘You have hurt me irreparably!’ Still thinking of himself, you see, not of your wasted evenings and wasted gas that burned as an altar light at his sanctuary.”

The Right Man had listened attentively. Slowly and soberly he said, “So that is an egotist! Dearie, it’s a misnomer. He is a conceited puppy.”

“Yet, you wouldn’t call his regard for himself puppy love, would you?” asked the Right Girl, and the Right Man wondered.

THE HUMORIST

The sweet voice stilled. The green canoe floated down the dark lake. Nothing could be heard save the hushed splash of the dipping paddles as they hit the water. The Right Girl smoothed a pillow and rested comfortably.

“That was a pretty song,” complimented the Right Man, “only a trifle sad for you!”

“I like to be sad and morbid once in a while,” said his fair companion. “I would hate to be optimistic. There! I’ve shown my true colors. I love to weep!”

“Well! I am disappointed!” The man’s tone seemed hurt. “One of the many reasons why I liked you was your ability to be so jolly and gay.”

“Why use the past tense?” the girl sat upright. “Has my sudden sign of individuality extinguished your admiration?”

“Ouch!” groaned the Right Man aloud, “hast swallowed the dictionary?”

HE SWALLOWED A JOKE BOOK

“No, but I once knew a youth who swallowed a joke book.”

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The Right Man laughed. "A description of him. Is he second on the blacklist?"

The Right Girl pouted.

"Go on," urged the Right Man, "introduce me to the humorist."

"I won't," she snapped, forgetting her grammar. "I don't feel a bit funny. I seldom do when I think of him forever smiling."

"Appreciating his own humor?" asked the Right Man, gaily in tune with the world. The moon sailed across the sky and the girl frowningly pointed it out.

"See the moon! He's an optimist. Does he ever stop grinning?"

"Only when you have been a naughty lady," replied the Right Man jocosely.

"I warn you not to be flippant. I'm in no mood for it."

"Suppose you had married the humorist. What then?"

At this the Right Girl drooped pensively. "I'd rather have a grumbler. You can come to some understanding. But from a man who is pleased at everything and turns and twists all situations into jokes, deliver me! Imagine if the eggs at breakfast are not as fresh as they should be, and you wish to compose a tirade for the grocer. As you rehearse it on your life partner he will only come across with, 'Why does a chicken cross the road?' So sympathetic!"

"Is that the way the humorist would act? How very disagreeable when you have a headache!"

"When you have a headache," repeated the Right

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Girl, "you are obliged to listen to his hearty mirth as he reads the comic section of the evening newspapers."

"Does he woo in the same jocular manner?"

THE GIRL GIGGLES

The Right Girl couldn't refrain from a light giggle. "He once asked me if I was fond of birds, and when I said I was, he retorted, 'Kiss me for a lark.' "

The Right Man dropped a paddle. He murmured wrathfully. The girl regained her good nature as the Right Man lost track of his.

"One touch of humor makes the whole world kin!" she sang out.

The Right Man was strangely silent.

"'Smatter?" asked the Right Girl.

"That last witticism irritated me."

"Oh, you disappoint me. I thought you so jolly and gay. That was why I loved you." The maiden laid great stress on the "ed."

They drifted. They pondered.

"It's pleasant to be pleasant when you feel pleasant," soliloquized the Right Girl, "but it's unpleasant to try to be pleasant when you don't feel pleasant."

"That's no joke!" from the Right Man, as he caught up with better spirits.

"No, the only joke is the humorist," said the Right Girl, and the Right Man tipped the canoe as he bestowed upon ruby lips a bird of a kiss!

THE MOLLYCODDLE

“Come, let’s go ’round the porch,” invitingly beckoned the Right Girl to the Right Man. “I’m tired of listening to the small talk of these women,” she whispered to him. “If the conversation was at all uplifting I’d stay and develop my soul, but surely their hubbies’ salaries and their maids’ blunders and wrongdoings will not benefit me.”

The Right Man seemed ready to accompany her to the end of the earth.

“I’ve had such a narrow escape!” she told him, as they swung in the free-for-all hammock. “One woman a while ago said that her John just doted on washing dishes. The more of them to do, the merrier.”

A LUCKY ESCAPE

The Right Man, having often camped out, threw up his hands in amazement. “You don’t say! But why have you had the escape? I should think she was the one, escaping from menial work.”

“I may be primitive”—the girl resembled anything but a cave-dweller, as she spoke pleasantly—“but I’d rather slave—though it isn’t necessary now, there are so many labor-saving devices—I’d prefer to do the home tasks with the knowledge that you

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were safe in another room comfortably reading or smoking, after a hard day at the office, than to have you pottering around trying to hinder me."

A vision of himself, clad in a checked apron, provoked the Right Man to chuckle at the very idea. "I can't distinguish a rolling pin from a dumbbell. I suppose I could shave potatoes."

The Right Girl leaned toward him and adjusted his tie. "I sincerely hope that you will not be called upon to perform any culinary duties. I trust that you will keep out of the kitchen."

"Honest! I promise!" vowed the Right Man. "But to go back to your escape. What did you mean—from a jungle beast?"

Her eyes twinkled merrily before her answer came. "Yes, from the woeful, doleful mollycoddle."

"Here Molly, here Molly!" called the man as to a cat. "I want to know more about you."

This was the Right Girl's cue. "I never heard of a king looking at a cat. However, and I shall now present the mollycoddle to you. Three summers ago we went back to nature and boarded on a farm, and we found the proprietor to be a tall, handsome young man. My heart palpitated considerably until I further discovered that, besides running the place, he acted as his own domestic help! The sight of this husky sample of manhood kneading bread cured me. That he was clever, cannot be denied. He could cook, launder, dust, sweep"—

"In short," chimed in the Right Man, "he was a perfect jewel of a maid. Where did you come in?"

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CONSTANT PROPOSALS

“Generally through the back way. I feared to meet him! He proposed every time we came face to face, and he was always accompanied by a pan under his arm, or had a towel wound around his head. Though I never swerved from a decided ‘No,’ he regained courage whenever he polished the silver. My room was the pink of cleanliness, the height of neatness. He kept it so!”

“I should think he would have come in handy. What a chance for a languid lady.” The Right Man had been touched by this useful ghost of the past. “He wanted you badly, too.” A nonentity is so appealing!

“He might have wanted me,”—the Right Girl blushed becomingly—“but he didn’t need me.”

“I need you,” said the Right Man by way of comfort.

“And I respect you!” For which the Right Girl was promptly and appropriately awarded. It pays to idealize.

SENTIMENTAL TOMMY

For the first time, the Right Man called at the Right Girl's city address. He entered breathlessly and caught her extended hands in an unmerciful grip.

"Do you know," he exclaimed eagerly, "I was never more surprised in all my life than when I turned the corner of this street to-night?"

The Right Girl stood unfeignedly awe-stricken by his evident excitement and strange, undemonstrative greeting. "Why?" she managed to gasp, thinking perhaps he had found a fat wallet on the pavement.

"Oh! it's too wonderful," he raved on. "I—I used to live on this same street years and years ago, and I'd entirely forgotten until the houses suddenly seemed friendly and one stood embossed, and I recollect ed with a rush of dear memories our old home! It's too great to think that I can pass it every evening I come to see you!"

"We're going to move on the fifteenth," said the Right Girl, in a matter-of-fact tone, and, though she had spoiled his climax, he rallied.

THE OLD HOME

"It's the fourth house over the way after that row of brownstones." He rushed to the window

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and pulled up the shade. "There it is"—he indicated which one. "See that light? That used to be our room. Three of us boys had it together. And the yard! Such good fun as we had out there climbing the fence. I'd like to see the yard again. Do you think if I stopped in the occupant would let me have a peek at it?"

The Right Girl apparently timed him, for she directed an impatient glance at the clock.

"Nothing can compare with this feeling of reviewing a bygone dwelling wherein every nook and cranny bears the mark of your pet penknife." He pressed his nose against the glass, drinking in the familiar sight.

The girl stifled a sigh. "The house must have been in a fine condition when you left. I hate to disturb you from your pretty reverie, but I think—I just think—that you have tickets for a show and I think that they are dated for this evening."

The Right Man awoke. "Get your wrap quick," he commanded. "I'll 'phone for a taxi."

Once within the cab, the Right Girl inquired what they were on their way to see.

"A revival of 'The Old Homestead,'" replied her sweetheart. "It's a famous play."

"That's the last straw!" she cried, and, after a dreadful silence, "Look here! I want you to understand that I once declined a proposal from a Sentimental Tommy, and at this late hour I'm not going to be caught in the sugar-coated toils of another! Really, dearest," she coaxed, almost mirthfully, "I'm afraid we shall clash on the subject of 'Old Homes.' I don't mind being stored in one

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when all my faculties are gone, but until then I'll move every seven years at least. It's sanitary!"

A FUTILE PROTEST

The man made a futile attempt at protesting. "Wait a minute," she waved him off. "I could have wed a rich, poetical gentleman and resided in a ruined castle with twittering birds, while my spouse at my side read dreamy literature to me by the ream. All that was required of me in return was expressed rapture on hearing a delightful metaphor or simile. I gave it up for my secret ideal, a real, alive, bustling business man and a six-room apartment."

"Well, I've been feeling 'blue' all day. I guess I want a home. That boarding house gets on my nerves." The Right Man pitied himself.

"You shall have a home, precious," she assured him, "and it will be the loveliest ever, because of our own making. As two birds build and decorate——"

The Right Man slipped an arm tenderly around the modified basque. "Who's sentimental, now?" he laughed. And though she thought, "Not I, indeed!" had there been a jury to judge they would have brought in a verdict of "Guilty" for both.

A FAREWELL

Aye, 'tis long now that we have walked together;
And how you clung to me through storm and winter weather!

Hard by, below, beneath the stalwart pine,
Marked in the soil, old prints of yours and mine;
Full well know I the "best of friends must part"—
But you seem bound with strings around my heart;
Tattered, torn, and bent; and withered is your tongue;

You're creaking, worn, rent; and I'm still young!
Another after you will seem so lowly,
You hid the worst in me, saw only holy;
To some new fancy, younger, I shall turn.
Though now my very feet do burn
As I recall with you my first chance meeting;
Tightly squeezed and pressed, this was your violent greeting;

I love you as we part more than I loved you then;
I held you till the last—farewell—Amen.

Gone is my pikéd toe!

Gone beaded string and bow!

Gone—fall and winter shoe—

Twice soled and heeled, I had enough of you!

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